

LD 1404
Hadriane Hatfield
Portland

April 8, 2025

Dear Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Hadriane Hatfield and I work in access services at Glickman Library at the University of Southern Maine. I am writing to urge you to support LD 1404 (HP 926) "Resolve, to Create a Working Group on the Status of School Libraries and on Public Libraries in Maine."

It is impossible to overstate the importance of public and school libraries in terms of their contributions to community and democracy. Not only are they one of the few "third spaces" left where people can gather without having to make a purchase, they provide meaningful programming, free access to computers and wifi (especially important given the digital divide in rural areas), and ensure that people of all ages have access to information and entertainment regardless of their wealth or class. Libraries also play critical roles in emergency preparedness, public health and safety, and economic development.

Against the backdrop of our federal government devaluing our profession and cutting funding opportunities by placing the entire staff of the Institute of Museum and Library Services on administrative leave on March 31, the passage of LD 1404 would offer some meaningful and greatly-needed support for the continued work of public and school libraries.

This bipartisan Resolve is thoughtful, well-developed, and absolutely necessary for the future well-being of Maine's communities.

Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 1404.

Sincerely,
Hadriane Hatfield